



2021 Music ATAR Practical (Performance) examination marking key – guide to changes

Summary of significant changes

- ‘Pitch and tone’ is split into two criteria: ‘Criterion 3 – Pitch’ and ‘Criterion 4 – Tone’, both with a total of 6 marks.
- ‘Style and expression’ becomes ‘Criterion 5 – Expressive elements’ and is reduced by one mark for a possible total of 4 marks.
- ‘Criterion 6 – Musical interaction’ is reinstated after the 2020 COVID-19 adjustment.

All changes are outlined in the table below.

Pitch and tone

The most significant change to the key relates to ‘Pitch and tone.’ In 2019, the markers of the WACE Music practical examinations were surveyed regarding the marking key:

- 62% of markers believed there should be some change to the key
- 95% of those who indicated some change should be made supported the separation of pitch and tone.

This change was supported by the Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Historical consideration of splitting pitch and tone

In 2011, consideration was given to the splitting of pitch and tone and was decided against for the following reasons:

1. *The attributes of pitch and tone are closely dependent in most instruments, and correlate in most student performances.*
Feedback from markers over a number of years indicates a frustration with the inability to distinctly judge pitch (essentially whether the right notes are being played) from tone (the quality of the sound made by the player by their control of the instrument) in the current marking key. It is possible for candidates to play the ‘right notes with a poor quality of sound’ and vice versa.
2. *The difficulties in comparing flexible-pitched instruments (e.g. strings, winds, voice) with fixed-pitched and non-pitched instruments (e.g. keyboard instruments and percussion). It was felt that intonation in flexible-pitched instruments was roughly equivalent to tone in fixed-/non-pitched instruments and so the two should be retained within the one criterion.*

Advice on applying the new Criterion 4 – Tone

Tone relates to the variations in sound that are possible based on the performer's control of their instrument/voice. The quality, purity or clarity of sound and the ability to produce consistent sound quality can be assessed in all instruments and voices.

For percussion, tone relates to the characteristic sound of the instrument, e.g. a snare, tom, bass, timpani, keyboard percussion, all of which can be struck incorrectly and in such a way that does not allow the instrument to resonate to produce the correct tone.

For piano, the quality and clarity of tone is determined by various factors such as the consistency of pressure applied to the keys, the flexibility of the wrist and arm and appropriate use of the pedal. For pipe organ and harpsichord, the choice of manuals and stops are the main factors that would be assessed by the tone criterion.

Complete list of changes in the 2021 Music ATAR course Practical (performance) marking key

Aspect of key	Change for the 2021 version	Elaboration
Criterion 1	Out of a total of 12 marks	Rhythm is kept equally weighted with the combination of pitch and tone
	'/fluctuations' added to the proficient (8–9 marks) shelf of Rhythm	It is made more explicit that, at this level, minor tempo fluctuations are acceptable (not only minor errors in rhythm) as long as the student 'recovers well'
Criterion 2	Zero shelf reworded as 'poor' rather than 'inadequate'	For consistency with other criteria in 'Technique'
	Three shelf reworded as 'satisfactory' rather than 'adequate'	For consistency with other criteria in 'Technique'
Criterion 3	Split into 'Criterion 3 – Pitch' and 'Criterion 4 – Tone', both with a total of 6 marks	'Pitch' addresses note accuracy and intonation. 'Tone' addresses quality and control of tone
	All shelves reworded to become poor, limited, inconsistent, satisfactory, proficient, excellent, consistently excellent respectively	For consistency with other criteria in 'Technique'
	Pitch explicitly described as comprising 'note accuracy' and 'intonation'	Clearly distinguished from the new Criterion 4. 'Intonation' was not explicitly mentioned in the 2020 key
Criterion 4	New criterion named 'Tone'	
	Shelves described as for Criteria 1–3	For consistency with other criteria in 'Technique'
	Tone elaborated as 'quality and control of tone'	Clearly distinguished from Criterion 3. 'Quality' relates to the quality/purity/clarity of the candidate's sound. 'Control' relates to the candidate's ability to produce consistent sound quality and manipulate the sound, e.g. vibrato
Technique section (Criteria 1–4)	Now out of 30 marks	Total increases due to the increased marks in Criterion 1 and the splitting of the old Criterion 3. The 'Technique' section remains 40% of the final mark

Aspect of key	Change for the 2021 version	Elaboration
Criterion 5	Renamed 'Expressive elements'	More accurately describes what candidates are expected to demonstrate across all musical contexts
	One shelf removed: now out of 4 marks, previously 5	Allows for clearer distinction and progression between shelves
	Shelves reworded to: poor application, applies limited, competently applies many, effectively applies most, consistently and effectively applies.	For consistency of language with 'Criterion 6 – Musical interaction'
	'Stylistic performance conventions' removed from the shelf descriptions	To clearly distinguish between the current 'Style and expression' and 'Stylistic interpretation'
	'Tempo' included in the shelf descriptions	Adherence to indicated or implied tempo and changes in tempo is considered significant in this criteria
Criterion 6	'Criterion 6 – Musical interaction' criterion reinstated	Returned to pre-COVID-19 state
Criterion 7	'Stylistic performance conventions' added to all shelves for all contexts	Relocated from Criterion 5 for a more clear distinction between the two criteria
	'Phrasing' added to Contemporary, Jazz and Music Theatre	It was felt that phrasing is important in all genres and should be considered part of 'stylistic interpretation' for all, not just WAM, as in the current key
	Minor changes for consistency between the four specific performance contexts	Zero shelves use the 'poor' descriptor like Criteria 1–5 Five and six shelves use 'competently' rather than 'capably,' like Criteria 5 and 6 'And/or' qualifier applied to the three lower shelves for Jazz and Music Theatre where there are two distinct aspects of the criterion
Style/Expression section (Criteria 5–7)	Now out of 17 marks	Total decreased due to the decrease in marks for Criterion 5. The 'Style/Expression' section remains 50% of the final mark